

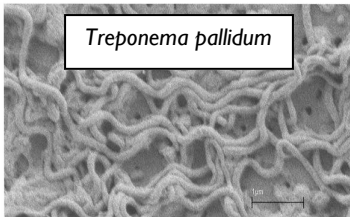


Epi News



February 2007

Flagstaff Reports Increase in Syphilis Cases



Coconino County Health Department (CCHD) employees have detected an increase in reported syphilis cases in January and early February. Since January 1, 2007, seven cases of syphilis were reported to the CCHD or diagnosed at the health department. All of these cases live in Flagstaff. The ages have ranged from 21 to 45 years of age. Coconino County typically has about 5 cases diagnosed per year.

An ongoing investigation by the CCHD has revealed that some of the individuals have had large numbers of partners. The investigations and contact tracing have been

difficult due to the abuse of methamphetamine and alcohol among cases and contacts.

Syphilis is a sexually transmitted disease (STD) caused by the bacterium *Treponema pallidum*. Many of the people infected with syphilis do not notice the symptoms, which usually start with a painless sore 3 weeks after having sex with someone who has syphilis. After the sore starts healing, or has healed, rashes can appear and last for 2-6 weeks. If left untreated over a period of years, syphilis can cause arthritis, blindness, heart disease, mental illness, and death.

We are strongly encouraging providers to test for syphilis when a client comes in requesting sexually transmitted disease testing. More information about syphilis can be found on the CDC website at <http://www.cdc.gov/STD/syphilis/default.htm>.

CCHD Disease Reporting Contact Information:

928-522-7920 (8AM – 5PM Mon-Fri.)

928-913-6744 (after hours urgent reports)

928-522-7922 FAX

Mail To: Coconino County Health Department, 2625 N. King St., Flagstaff, AZ 86004.

Healthcare providers and schools are required to report certain diseases to the CCHD.

More information available at:

<http://www.coconino.az.gov/health.aspx?id=1183>



Influenza Activity Slow So Far

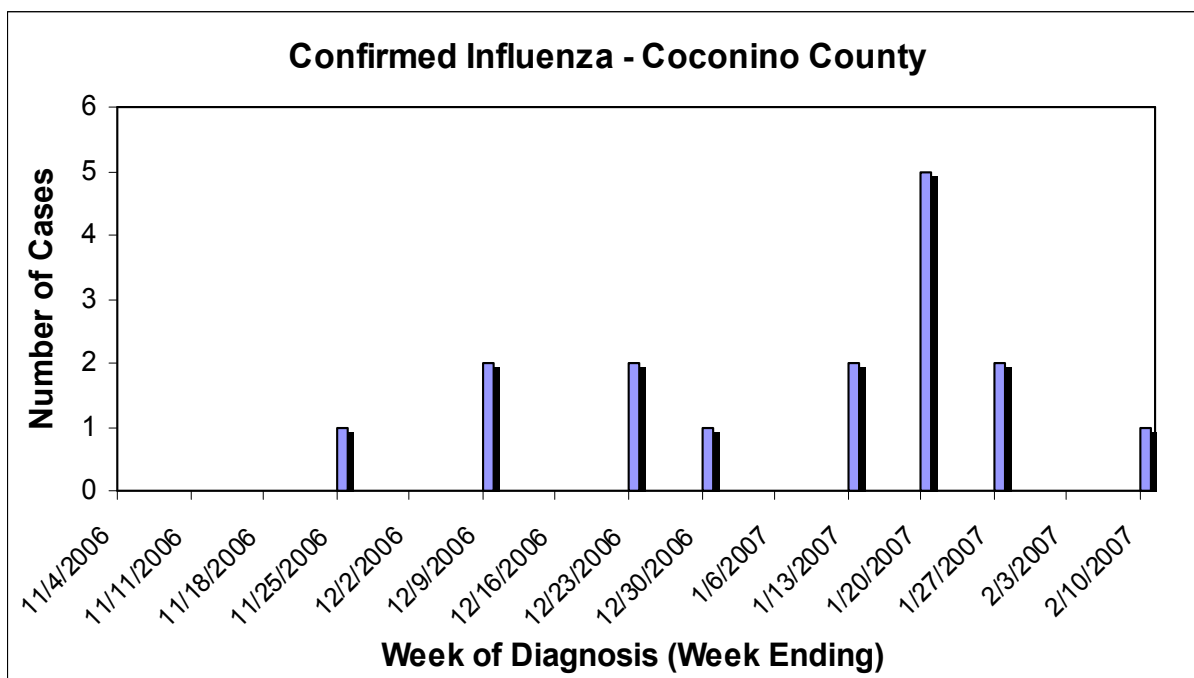
The flu season in Coconino County has gotten off to a slow start. As of Feb 15, only 16 confirmed cases of influenza have been reported to the Coconino County Health Department in county residents. During the 2005-6 season, 210 cases had been confirmed by this point in

time. Influenza-like illness (ILI) activity among patients seen at sentinel healthcare facilities has been low. The flu season typically peaks in February, but could be delayed this year due to the late start. Flu activity can continue into the spring. (Refer to the chart on back)

Norovirus Outbreak

In December, an outbreak of acute gastrointestinal illness occurred among participants of a Christmas dinner party held at a restaurant in Coconino County. CCHD conducted an epidemiological and environmental investigation. CCHD staff interviewed participants of the party and collected samples from surface swabbing in the restaurant. In all, 30 cases occurred from Dec 2-4, most of which became ill on Dec. 3. The overall attack rate for the event was 75%. No one sought medical care for their illness. The most common symptoms included nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, chills, and muscle aches. The outbreak was confirmed to have been caused by norovirus by laboratory analysis of three stool specimens from ill individuals. Hand contact surfaces in the kitchen, employee restroom, and banquet room were found to be contaminated with norovirus. Transmission probably occurred through contaminated food, serving utensils, and/or common surfaces in the buffet area. This outbreak was unusual for norovirus in that a large percentage of cases were sick for four days or longer.

Noroviruses are extremely infectious, but they usually cause mild illness. Infants and the elderly are at risk for dehydration caused by excessive vomiting and diarrhea. The virus can be spread through contaminated food or water, but it is also commonly spread through contaminated surfaces or objects. The spread of the illness can be prevented by frequent and proper hand washing (warm water and soap for 20 seconds), proper food handling, and by cleaning surfaces with bleach.



Communicable Disease Summary Report – Selected Diseases*

| Disease or Condition | 2006 TOTAL |
|---|------------|
| campylobacteriosis | 30 |
| coccidioidomycosis | 9 |
| enterohemorrhagic <i>E. coli</i> | 5 |
| giardiasis | 5 |
| <i>Haemophilus influenzae</i> : invasive disease | 2 |
| hepatitis A | 5 |
| hepatitis B | 17 |
| hepatitis C | 93 |
| meningococcal invasive disease | 1 |
| methicillin-resistant <i>Staphylococcus aureus</i> : invasive | 16 |
| mumps | 2 |
| pertussis | 45 |
| salmonellosis | 22 |
| shigellosis | 24 |
| <i>Streptococcus pneumoniae</i> invasive disease | 24 |
| streptococcal group A: invasive disease | 4 |
| varicella | 58 |
| VRE | 43 |
| West Nile virus infection | 1 |

*The number of cases diagnosed during the given year in residents of Coconino County. Data are provisional and subject to change.